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SUBJECT: OMAN MEDIA REACTION

1. SUMMARY: State daily "Oman" commented on the release of 200 Palestinian prisoners, it was surprising that there were Palestinian personalities revealed their identities and ideological belonging. "Oman" also stressed the importance of Iraqi stability for the region. Private daily "Al-Watan" hailed the courage of international human rights activists who sailed this week to Gaza. END SUMMARY

PRISONER RELEASE: "DANGEROUS GAMES"

2. On August 21, "Oman" (government-owned Arabic daily, circulation 38,000) called for Palestinians to remain vigilant against Israeli plans to divide their ranks. "The release of Palestinian Prisoners of War and the Dangers of Israeli Games":

"All must welcome any Israeli step releasing Palestinian prisoners of war, alleviation of repressive practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, or evacuation of any occupied lands; these ultimately fall in the Palestinians interest and its cause, the central issue for all Arabs. However, it is important to keep vigilant in the fact of Israeli tactics and games, which are designed to divide the Palestinian people. It is surprising that the Israeli decision to release 200 Palestinian prisoners of war became controversial within Palestinian movements and factions, aligning individual detainees to this faction or another. This is what Tel Aviv wants to distract the Palestinians with, remembering that Israel has always been happy to know their tactics have succeeded in compromising Palestinian unity and increasing divisions. Now the responsibility actually falls on the Palestinians to deprive Israel of this opportunity."

BREAKING THE GAZA BLOCKADE

3. Private daily "Al Watan" (circulation 42,000) On August 24 wrote about the effort of various international human rights and peace activists to halt Israeli practices against the Palestinians, asking "Is it the End of Israeli Influence?":

"Israel finally bowed to international pressure, in the form of a group of peace activists aboard small boats, allowing them to enter Gaza, the first gesture of its kind that breaks the blockade imposed by Israel. Now comes the chance for others from various countries around the world to say no to Israeli arrogance. This is another example of people willing to sacrifice their lives for the sake of peace in Palestine, recalling the examples of American activist Rachel Corrie and the British journalist James Miller, who both were killed by Israel. Despite the release of the British journalist Allan Johnson who was detained by the Palestinians in compliance with the international community's demands, Israel continues to tirelessly describe the Palestinians as terrorists in all international forums. Also, the Israelis recently filed lawsuits

against Bank China for allegedly supporting terrorism by transferring funds to Palestinian factions. However, China ignored the Israeli accusation, a defeat of Israeli claims against any state, group, or organization of civil societies that support the Palestinian people in their just cause. In addition, we cannot overlook the significance of the Russian declaration of willingness to arm Syria in response to the Israeli militarization of Georgia."

STABILITY FOR IRAQ AND THE REGION

14. "Oman" on August 24 expressed hope for Iraqi-American talks and suggested that all Iraqi parties unify for the benefit results of their people, the stability of Iraq, and the whole region.
"Iraqi-American Talks and Maintaining the Stability of Iraq":

"Recently there have been controversies among Iraqi parties about the ongoing negotiations between the Iraqi government and America on the future of U.S. forces in Iraq and different ideas on Iraqi-American relations and what would be agreed. Taking into account that the agreement between Iraq and the U.S. or other countries is an Iraqi internal affair - especially if it relates to its present and future - it is widely known that the various developments in Iraq will affect one way or another the overall situation of the Arab Gulf, states which are still suffering from the consequences of the attack on Iraq in 2003... Several regional and international parties show great interest in what is going on Iraq, not because of its economic and oil (Iraq's huge wealth), but because of its vital location and the role that Iraq plays, which have significant impact on events in the region. Regardless of the nature of the Iraqi-American talks, which Washington pointed out are

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continuous and meant to reach an agreement in the coming period, it is important and necessary that various Iraqi parties, without exception, ensure not only best results from these talks, but also the largest degree of national consensus about the present and future, toward a ways of building a new Iraq in the interest of all Iraqis."

GRAPPO